

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

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1. (Currently Amended) A method of ~~enhancing~~ promoting protein absorption and utilization from the gastrointestinal tract of a subject ~~in need of~~ such ~~enhanced~~ protein absorption and utilization comprising the oral administration of a combination of milk protein concentrates and probiotic bacteria in an amount sufficient ~~(to increase the~~ to increase the subject's total daily consumption of protein to approximately 1.5 grams to approximately 4.0 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day; the milk protein concentrate having a protein content of about 65% to about 90% and there being about 100,000 to about 50,000,000 probiotic bacteria organisms per gram of milk protein concentrate.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the probiotic bacteria is selected from the group ~~consisting~~ consisting of *bifido* bacteria, *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Lactobacillus helveticus*, *Lactobacillus paracasei*, ~~lactobacillus~~ Lactobacillus bulgaricus, ~~streptococcus~~ Streptococcus thermophilus and combinations thereof.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the probiotic bacteria consists of *bifidus* Bifidobacterium longum combined with ~~lactobacillus~~ Lactobacillus bulgaricus and ~~streptococcus~~ Streptococcus thermophilus.

4. (Canceled) Please cancel Claim 4 without prejudice to filing a continuation with respect thereto.

5. (Canceled) Please cancel Claim 5 without prejudice to filing a continuation with respect thereto.

6. (Canceled) Please cancel Claim 6 without prejudice to filing a continuation with respect thereto.

7. (Currently Amended) A method of ~~enhancing~~ promoting protein utilization and absorption ~~absorption~~ in a subject on a high protein diet ~~comprising the oral administration of~~ comprising the oral administration of combination of milk protein concentrates and probiotic bacteria, the probiotic bacteria being selected from the group consisting of bifido bacteria, *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Lactobacillus helveticus*, *Lactobacillus paracasei*, ~~*lactobacillus*~~ *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, ~~*streptococcus*~~ *Streptococcus thermophilus* and combinations thereof; the subject being administered an amount of the combination sufficient to increase the to increase the subject's total daily consumption of protein to approximately 1.5 grams to approximately 4.0 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 7 wherein the probiotic bacteria consists of ~~*bifidus*~~ *Bifidobacterium longum* combined with ~~*lactobacillus*~~ *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, ~~*streptococcus*~~ *Streptococcus thermophilus*, or combinations thereof.

9. (Canceled) Please cancel Claim 9 without prejudice to filing a continuation with respect thereto.

10. (Currently amended) A method of promoting higher ratio of anabolism as compared to catabolism, ~~increasing~~ promoting muscle tissue growth, ~~reducing harmful side effects from consuming large quantities of protein, increasing~~ promoting amino acid production in the intestinal tract in an athlete and promoting the utilization ~~more efficiently utilizing each gram~~ of protein consumed by the athlete, the method comprising the consumption by the athlete of a combination of milk protein concentrates and probiotic bacteria, the probiotic bacteria being selected from the group of probiotic bacteria consisting ~~consisting~~ of *bifido* bacteria, *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Lactobacillus helveticus*, *Lactobacillus paracasei*, ~~lactobacillus~~ Lactobacillus *bulgaricus*, ~~streptococcus~~ Streptococcus *thermophilus* and combinations thereof; the athlete consuming an amount of the combination sufficient to increase the to increase the athlete's total daily consumption of protein to approximately 1.5 grams to approximately 4.0 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day.

11. (Currently amended) A process for producing an improved a probiotic protein concentrate comprising the steps of:

providing a probiotic organism culture, the culture containing *Bifido* bacteria and lactic acid producing bacteria;

filtering skim milk fluid by passing the skim milk through a filtering membrane to separate out non-protein constituents of the skim milk;

discontinuing the filtering of the skim milk when the skim milk protein content is about 65% to about 90% of the milk, thereby generating a skim milk protein concentrate; and

inoculating the skim milk protein concentrate with the probiotic organism cultures until a total organism count reaches about 100,000 to about 500,000 organisms per gram of skim milk protein concentrate.

12. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 11 wherein the lactic acid producing bacteria is chosen from the group consisting of *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Lactobacillus helveticus*, *Lactobacillus paracasei*, and combinations thereof.

13. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 11 wherein the step of providing probiotic organisms includes introducing a starter culture containing said probiotic organisms into a tank ~~to produce hydrolyzed milk peptones~~; and

feeding the probiotic organisms with a base medium to grow the probiotic organisms, the base medium comprising food and nutrients which are combined with hydrolyzed milk peptones.

14. (Original) The process according to claim 11 including the step of converting the inoculated skim milk protein concentrate from a fluid to a powder by spray drying the fluid inoculated milk protein concentrate.

15. (Currently Amended) A process for producing probiotic protein concentrate comprising the steps of :

combining a powder form of skim milk protein concentrate ~~having a skim milk protein content of about 65% to about 90% from which non-protein constituents have been removed~~ with ~~with~~ freeze-dried powder forms of probiotic organism culture until a total organism count within the combined powder reaches about 100,000 to about 50,000,000 organisms per gram of skim milk protein concentrate, said organism culture containing ~~Bifidie~~ *Bifido* bacteria and lactic acid-producing bacteria; and

mixing the powdered skim milk protein concentrate with the powdered probiotic organism culture until the ~~combined~~ combined powder is homogenous, the skim milk protein concentrate comprising about 65% to about 90% of the probiotic protein concentrate.

16. (Original) The process according to claim 13 wherein the lactic acid producing bacteria is chosen from the group consisting of *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Lactobacillus helveticus*, *Lactobacillus paracasei*, and combinations thereof.

17. (Currently Amended) A probiotic milk protein concentrate including the following ingredients by percentage of weight, of the concentrate including:

Milk protein concentrate from which non-protein constituents have been removed - ~~having a milk protein concentrate of 65% to 90%; and~~

probiotic organisms in an amount of 100,000 to 50,000,000 organisms per gram of milk protein concentrate; said probiotic organisms including:

A. *Bifido* Bacteria - .01% to 1%

B. *Acidophilus* Bacteria - .01% to 1%; and

C. 0.01% to 1% of a Lactic Acid Producing Bacteria chosen from the group consisting essentially of

a. *Lactobacillus Bulgarious*

b. *Streptococcus Thermophilus*

c. *Lactobacillus Acidophilus*

~~said ingredients being mixed until their diffusion is thoroughly achieved within the powdered concentrate.~~

18. (Currently Amended) The probiotic milk protein concentrate of claim 17, and wherein one or more of the following probiotic organisms ~~may be~~ are added to the concentrate by weight of 0.1% to 1% of the concentrate:

A. *Lactobacillus plantarum*

B. *Lactobacillus helveticus*

C. *Lactobacillus paracasei*

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- D. *Bifidobacterium bifidum*
 - E. *Bifidobacterium infantis*
 - F. *Bifidobacterium animalis.*
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